

The Baptist Record

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Mississippians among athletes making inroads in Indian Ocean

By Craig and Melissa Bird

Most people go to the Seychelles to laze on the beach and scuba dive and party. Most people don't go to Madagascar at all.

But Jackie Ard from Lawrence County and Courtney Cash from Columbus, went to the Seychelles — and Madagascar — to assist a basketball team and share their faith this past summer.

It was a long — and expensive — way to go since they not only had to raise \$2,500 each but also take a month off from their jobs. But Ard went, "to be a part of something I felt God called me to do." Cash signed up, "to experience missions."

Both Ard, who considers Topeka Church in Jayess her home church, and Cash, from Fairview Church in Columbus, currently attend Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. She was part of a women's basketball team, and he was chaplain for the men's team, playing under the banner of the International Sports Federation, that played the national teams in the two Indian Ocean nations to help them prepare for the Indian Island Ocean Games in August.

They must have helped, since Madagascar took the gold medal in men's basketball and Seychelles, both silvers. And since the men's team split 2-2 in the Seychelles and 1-1 in Madagascar while the women were 3-1 and 1-1, they can lay claim to being part of medal-quality teams themselves.

But while basketball was the reason for the trip, showing people a Christian lifestyle was the purpose. The Seychelles, a lush tropical paradise, is a highly secular and affluent society where an estimated 70% of the population is illegitimate.

Madagascar is poverty-ridden and is dominated religiously by adherents of African Traditional Religion.

Evangelical Christian churches are tiny minorities in both places — yet the governments not only invited ISF to come but paid for the hotel and food.

And in the Seychelles it was not just any hotel and food. A double room at the Beau Vallon Hotel costs more than \$250 a night. Menus featured gourmet dishes like lobster, shrimp, tuna steak, and sirloin steak.

The beach was stunning, though not always enjoyable when Coach Mike Barrera was making the team run three miles for conditioning.

In Madagascar the attractions were more unusual: rides in taxis without starters and with plastic jugs adapted as gas tanks; frigid temperatures (Antananarivo, the capital of Madagascar, is more than 8,000 feet above sea level) and uncomfortable confrontations with poverty.

In both countries the basketball was rough, a sort of are-you-sure-this-isn't-rugby kind of competition. Added to the geographic adjustment (in the Seychelles the games were outdoors at 4 p.m. — the heat of the afternoon, while the altitude in Madagascar had even the top athletes wheezing for air after a few trips down the court) the rugged play made it tough going.

The men's team was basically the Southwestern Seminary team with the addition of one player. The ISF women's basketball and volleyball teams were split about evenly between current college players and recent graduates.

Everywhere they played they attracted crowds who, while plairly rooting for their national team to win, still appreciated the skill of the visitors.

And they proved the truth of an

athletic riddle — you can't be friends with an opponent until he respects you and the way to get respect is to beat him.

For example, after the Seychelles team rolled over the ISF team during the first game, one of Davis' teammates jokingly asked the star Seychelles player, "Are we good enough competition for you or should we get someone else to take our place next match?"

"Get someone else," he sneered. "You don't belong on the court with us." Yet, two games later after the ISF squad won by 15 points he was friendly and open to visiting with the Americans.

"Sports is a wonderful door into a country and culture," Fred Sorrells, a Southern Baptist missionary who set up the summer tour, explained. "Not only do the athletes and coaches get to know the opponents but they can make an impression on the hotel staff and other people they meet. Plus their very presence, as highly visible Christians, is an encouragement to the local Christians who often feel overwhelmed by their own society."

The trip was the first project of the International Sports Federation, a Dallas-based organization dedicated to matching Christian athletes, coaches, trainers, and doctors with requests for their skills in the United States and around the world.

"We plan to concentrate on the Indian Ocean Island countries at first because we have already established ourselves there and there are no similar groups there," said Cheryl Wolfinger, ISF director. "But we are open to requests from anyone, anywhere."

Craig Bird, overseas correspondent, and Melissa Bird, administrative assistant, are FMB correspondents for Africa.



Courtney Cash, a graduate of Mississippi State University, goes over a shot chart with Mickey Porter who coached the ISF women's basketball team on an Indian Ocean tour this summer.

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Jackie Ard, front, wonders where the ball is while her Seychelles defender wonders if it will ever come down during a game this summer in the Seychelles. (FMB photos by Melissa Bird)

Americans "cheat" at coin toss

NAIROBI, Kenya (BP) — Twenty-eight American athletes, trainers, and coaches waited in one corner of the airport. Roughly the same number of Italian tourists waited in the other.

An airline clerk with a single Kenya shilling coin stood in the middle — if not literally, certainly emotionally.

The flight was overbooked. Both the Italians and the Americans needed the 10 remaining available seats. So Air Madagascar resolved it the fair way: a winner-take-all coin toss.

The Americans won.

The resulting celebration included "high fives" and shouts of "Praise the Lord!" in equal parts. The sports evangelism tour of Indian Ocean island countries rolled on.

Actually, the coin toss wasn't really fair. The American group cheated. They'd been praying about the ticket situation for almost a week since learning 10 of their reservations for that leg of the trip had been mysteriously wiped off the computer three different times. There was serious praying — praying that even delayed meals for half an hour at times. A 30-minute fast is serious when you're an athlete playing in international competition.

"God just wanted all of them to get to Madagascar," explained Fred Sorrells, Southern Baptist missionary to that country and the linchpin in the project. "If 10 kids had had to stay in Kenya until the next flight four days later, it would have killed either our men's basketball or our women's basketball and volleyball games."

"But this whole thing has been one miracle after another, so we shouldn't have been surprised that if it came to a coin toss, we'd win."

"One thing that has really struck me on this trip is that when we step off the airplane, we have been doubling or tripling or quadrupling the number of Christians in that country," said Cheryl Wolfinger, who played on the women's teams. "And at times when I've been praying, the thought has come to me that at that particular moment I might be the only person in the whole country praying to God!"

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Guy Henderson

Persecution continues

Watch-dog committees tell of disturbing persecution of Christians in various countries. Amnesty International, AsiaWatch, the Pueblo Institute, and the Bible League plus hundreds of missionaries seek to keep the free world informed.

In China, persecution of believers appears to be increasing. Evidence backs up the story of interrogation of Christians, church property being confiscated, long prison sentences, torture and ill treatment, and often death while in detention. The People's Daily quotes Deng Xiaoping, China's unofficial ruler: "If the troublesome elements (religious believers and other dissidents) reappear in the future, we will not hesitate to use all methods to eliminate them as quickly as possible."

Persecution and martyrdom are not new to modern-day Christians. David Aikman of Time magazine said, "Non-Chinese should continue to bring pressure to bear on the Chinese government to end the persecution of Christians. We cannot long ignore the cry for help coming from China, Russia (CIS), Mexico, the

Philippines, and other nations."

Dennis M. Mulder, president of the Bible League, calls on Christians everywhere to pray, continue to send Bibles, and to speak out to President Clinton and congressmen.

A Christian Bible worker in China tells of an evangelist who was placed in a "water prison" for two months. He was required to stand or sit in water 24 hours a day. Upon release, his legs had to be amputated because of the infection.

In Russia, the Orthodox church appears to be behind the move to restrict evangelical work. Muslims in the Philippines are constantly harassing Christians. Evangelical Press reports that 30 Mexican Christians were forced to flee their homes and that 130 Baptists were attacked in June after a worship service in San Nicolas de Guadalupe. A mob of about 200 Roman Catholics stoned and clubbed Baptists as they were eating an outdoor lunch (The Baptist Record, Sept. 2). Scattered persecution reports have come from South America and Africa.

Remember Sunday as you ease into your comfortable pew that our

fellow believers in many areas suffer for the cause of Christ. Jesus warned us that persecution would come. The fire quickly burns away the chaff. "He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight" (Psalm 72:14, NIV).

Is there religious persecution in America? Ask the Muslim or other minority religious groups. We hardly enhance the beauty of our religion by attacking another in a physical, harmful manner.

In February 1951, medical missionary Bill Wallace shivered in a Communist prison cell in Wuchow, China. A few hours later he was dead. The Communists placed his body in a crude wooden coffin and nailed it closed. He was then taken to a bamboo-shaded cemetery, a grave was dug, but no service was allowed. All the mourners were driven away, leaving only an unmarked clod-heaped grave for one of China's great missionaries. It didn't remain unmarked for long. Chinese Christians took up an offering and erected a small monument. It didn't say much, only "For me to live is Christ."



October is Cooperative Program month —

The Cooperative Program miracle

By Jerry Rankin

To some, the Cooperative Program is a collection of funds. To others, it is a unified budget. Still others view it as a plan for cooperative missions.

The Cooperative Program has been called "the glue that holds Southern Baptists together," or "the rope of sand with strength of steel," or "the lifeline of missions," and given numerous other designations.

The Cooperative Program may be all or a blend of its titles and appellations, but my 23 years of service on the mission field have brought me to the conviction that it is more than a humanly-devised program to finance missions. To me the Cooperative Program is a living miracle of faith, love, cooperation, distribution, grace, and growth. I have experienced and witnessed it firsthand.

Each Lord's Day faithful Baptists give by faith to their local churches and by faith the churches share a percentage of those gifts each week or month for the work of Christ in their state, the U.S.A., and throughout the world. Faithfulness on the part of all Southern Baptists for just one Sunday would create a denomina-

tional economic crisis of astronomical proportions! Missionaries thank God daily for the faithfulness of Southern Baptists.

"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son...." God so loved the world that he also gave Southern Baptists a burden for a lost world and the love of his Son to reach it. Cooperative Program gifts are a tangible expression of that love. Almost 4,000 Southern Baptist foreign missionaries in 129 countries are the incarnate expression of that love as they make Christ known to the nations.

Faithful church members, cooperating Baptist churches, concerned associations, committed state conventions, other Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) entities, and the Foreign Mission Board (FMB) together weave a web of cooperation that encompasses the globe with evangelism that results in churches. This cooperative effort resulted in 251,901 baptisms overseas last year, an average of more than 4,800 baptized believers each week. A miracle, indeed.

The local church members vote on the percentage or dollar

amount of funds that are forwarded for all Cooperative Program causes. The state convention messengers vote on the percentage distribution of funds for state convention and SBC ministries. The SBC Executive Committee and the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention vote on the percentage of funds to each SBC entity, including the FMB.

No human instrumentality can claim credit for the success of the Cooperative Program. It is only by the grace of God that Southern Baptists have been blessed with the financial resources to reach our world. It is only by his grace and the leadership of the Holy Spirit that Southern Baptists have been led to contribute generously to missionary causes.

It is a miracle of God's grace that a culturally diverse and geographically scattered people called Southern Baptists can be bound together by trust that transcends our differences and combines our resources for doing together what none of us can do alone.

Since its beginning in 1925, the Cooperative Program has grown beyond the fondest dreams of our Baptist forefathers who

THE FRAGMENTS

Pennant fever

It was Saturday afternoon. The WMU editors' orientation was nearing an end when some near teenage editor mentioned a softball game. The Braves were giving fits to other teams, but that fact hardly worried us. Under a cloudless sky and with three gloves and a bat, we took to the field.

One writer was told to steal second. He promptly pulled the base from the ground and headed for the woods. The pitcher was on medication and was mostly unable to get the ball to home plate. Good batters were able to hit the ball on the ground (as in golf) and a "ground" took on new meaning.

With two outs in the first inning, an outfielder was called from his position to share a Pepsi with his wife. A heavy hitter

knocked a home run and the ball never left the infield.

Nurses stood by (mostly for those dying with laughter); the local helio-port was alerted. Name calling, even for editors, reached a new high (or low) and that from members of our own household. Ben Gay flowed like suntan lotion.

Oklahoma wanted an age limit on the players, while Arkansas leaned toward a weight limit. Mississippi added a fervent "Amen" to both motions. There was more effort to cover bald heads than to cover second base.

A balk by the pitcher meant he was tired. In fact, the whole team came in for lemonade during the second inning stretch and never made it back to the field. — GH

nurtured it through its infancy. Yet the last few years indicate a downward trend in SBC Cooperative Program gifts, while the potential for future growth is as great as the promises of God.

Our people, our churches, and our conventions must be challenged as never before to increase their gifts and their percentages

for global evangelization during these final years of Bold Mission Thrust.

Another miracle is in the making. I challenge you and your church and your state convention to be a vital part of what God is doing in our world.

Rankin is president, Foreign Mission Board.

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SBC leaders pledge own churches will up gifts to bolster CP

NASHVILLE (BP) — With Southern Baptist Convention agencies requesting more funds each year to tackle 21st-century challenges and opportunities, Executive Committee leaders are starting with themselves in an appeal to bolster the SBC's Cooperative Program.

CP giving so far this year, however, is some \$2.4 million below the 11-month point in the SBC budget.

Executive Committee President Morris H. Chapman, in his comments during the committee's Sept. 20-21 meeting in Nashville, urged a CP giving goal for SBC churches of at least 10% of their undesignated offerings.

"Some churches in our convention give well over 20%" to Southern Baptists' longstanding channel of financing home and foreign missions, said Morris H. Chapman, Executive Committee president. "Others give 2 to 3%," while the SBC-wide average stands at 9.3%, he said.

"Hopefully those churches which give lesser percentages will prayerfully determine to increase giving gradually, if not immediately, through the Cooperative Program to help support our Southern Baptist missionaries," Chapman said. He commended Executive Committee members

for heading toward the 10% mark in their churches' CP giving, noting the average now has risen to 7.23%.

For the 1994-95 fiscal year, SBC agencies seeking the largest increases are the Christian Life Commission, 28%; Southwestern Seminary, 12%; Brotherhood Commission, 10%; Historical Commission, 9.1%; Southeastern Seminary, 8%; Stewardship Commission, 8%.

The Foreign Mission Board is requesting a 5.23% increase; the Home Mission Board, 3.6%.

Agencies not seeking an increase are the Education Commission and Golden Gate Seminary. Most other agencies' requests are roughly 5%.

In other CP news from the Executive Committee meeting:

— Presidents of the six SBC seminaries affirmed "our unrestrained support of the Cooperative Program" and pledged to "continue and expand Cooperative Program education, support, and promotion through classroom instruction and special programs...."

— The Executive Committee declined action on a motion referred from the SBC annual meeting in Houston calling for a minimum church CP contribution for committee members.

CBF council appoints 6 new missionaries, cites growth

DECATUR, Ga. (BP) — Three couples appointed missionaries highlighted the fall meeting of the Coordinating Council of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship which also disposed of mostly routine business and heard encouraging reports.

The Sept. 14-16 meeting in this Atlanta suburb is one of three held during the year by the 80-plus member steering committee of the CBF, an organization of moderate Southern Baptists who are critical of conservative SBC leadership.

Although most business at the sessions was routine, the council did hear a number of reports of growth for the three-year-old organization.

"We are adding a church a day," Cecil Sherman, CBF's coordinator, told the council in his report. Sherman, the group's chief executive officer, said at the end of eight months of 1993 there were 1,094 churches which had contributed \$6.8 million through the three CBF giving plans. That compares to the \$7.3 million received in all of 1992 and \$4.5 million in 1991, from 841 and 391 churches, respectively.

Although some of the funds received by the CBF are channeled to SBC agencies, more is being channeled to CBF causes

each year, Sherman said. Between \$5.5 and \$6 million likely will be channeled to CBF causes this year from the three giving plans, he said.

The goal for the CBF's Global Missions Offering for 1993-94 will be \$3 million, R. Keith Parks, global missions coordinator, said. Parks said he was optimistic about achieving the goal since people will see "we're appointing new missionaries, that we're expanding our fields, that we're moving out in some exciting new directions." Parks said the CBF has enough budget to support at least 40 missionaries.

Parks said CBF will purchase some generic missions material, tailored for CBF use, from Woman's Missionary Union.

The six new missionaries were appointed Sept. 15 at a special evening service at First Church, Decatur, where the council was meeting.

David and Tracy Bengston will work with the CBF Relief Coalition in Miami. David, 30, a native of Florida, is an engineer and Tracy, 31, a native of North Carolina, is a freelance writer.

Glen Allen and Verr Dean Williams will go to The Czech Republic.

Glen Allen, 32, will be a theo-

logical teacher while Verr Dean, 33, will be a church and home worker. He is a native of Jackson, and she is a native of Crosbyton, Texas.

Stanley and Kay Parks will work in an unnamed country in Asia. He will be a strategy coordinator for work among World A people group while she will be a church and home worker. Stanley, 30, is a doctoral candidate at Southwestern Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, and Kay, 30, is a teacher in Arlington, Texas.

Parks is the son of Keith Parks, the CBF global missions coordinator.



Verr Dean, Glen Allen Williams

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

The Baptist Record

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Exec. Committee urges prayer for Clinton, approves study

By Herb Hollinger and Art Toalston

NASHVILLE (BP) — In unanimous voice votes and show of hands, the Executive Committee approved 37 items of business during its Sept. 20-21 meeting, from a 40-day call to prayer for President Bill Clinton to a re-examination of responsibilities assigned to each SBC agency.

Also adopted without opposition were stances refusing to use the SBC constitution as a means to challenge churches that ordain women and continuing to question SBC investments with companies making corporate contributions to Planned Parenthood and other pro-abortion groups.

And, in a straightforward push for consensus, Executive Committee leaders urged a Cooperative Program giving goal for SBC churches of at least 10% of undesignated offerings they receive each week.

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ern Baptists' longstanding channel of financing home and foreign missions," said Morris H. Chapman, Executive Committee president. "Others give 2 to 3%," while the SBC-wide average stands at 9.3%, he said.

"Hopefully those churches which give lesser percentages will prayerfully determine to increase giving gradually, if not immediately, through the Cooperative Program to help support our Southern Baptist missionaries," Chapman said. He commended Executive Committee members for heading toward the 10% mark in their churches' CP giving, noting the average now has risen to 7.23%.

"A new determination has emerged to build an even stronger convention... with unequivocal biblical convictions," Chapman said. "But if these strong convictions lead us to an independent mentality and away from a cooperative spirit in financially supporting missions, we will ultimately fail because one of our great strengths has been the desire and ability to do together what we could not otherwise do separately."

The Executive Committee's call for prayer for President Clinton and Vice President Al Gore followed a lively account by SBC President H. Edwin Young of a

Sept. 16 White House meeting involving himself, Clinton, Gore, Chapman, Rex M. Horne Jr., pastor of Clinton's home church in Little Rock, Ark., and Wendell Estep, a Columbia, S.C., pastor.

Young, pastor of Houston's Second Church, recounted giving Clinton a copy of "Pray for the President, a 40-Day Intercessory Prayer Plan," a booklet recently developed by the SBC Brotherhood Commission.

Accepting an invitation to jog with Clinton the following day, Young said the president told of reading the booklet and appreciating its call to prayer in his behalf.

"There is a heart there — a spiritual cross-pull — in the life of our president," Young said of Clinton's apparent sensitivity to spiritual matters. "Who knows what the Lord will do?" The SBC, in its June annual meeting in Houston, urged Clinton and Gore "to stand for biblical morality" and reverse their stances for special rights for homosexuals and for abortion.

The study of SBC agency responsibilities, called "program statements," will entail "taking a hard look" at the SBC boards and commissions, said Fred Wolfe, Executive Committee chairman (See **EXEC. COMMITTEE** on p. 8)

Moderates issue "call" to state conventions

NASHVILLE (BP) — The battle now, they say, is in the state Baptist conventions.

A "Call to State Conventions for the Preservation of Historic Southern Baptist Work and Witness" was adopted by some 85 Baptist moderate leaders from 13 states during a Sept. 23-24 meeting in Nashville organized by Houston layman John Baugh.

Baugh said the meeting was not tied to a particular moderate group such as the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship or Texas Baptists Committed he helped launch.

The "call," which underwent revision by an ad hoc committee and then the overall group, contains a preamble and five points.

The preamble states: "It is time for healing in the Southern Baptist Family. Now is the time for renewal and revival. The world desperately needs our witness. The problems of our day are too dangerous for anything less than a unified witness to the gospel of

Jesus Christ. How can such a renewal occur?"

The five points:

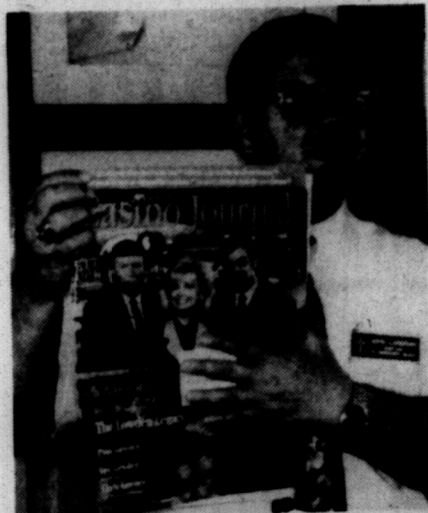
1) "Let each state convention renew its commitment to historic Baptist principles, the authority of Scripture, and the priesthood of all believers, resulting in the autonomy of all Baptist bodies and the voluntary character of cooperation in missions and evangelism."

2) "Let each state convention renew its commitment to the love of Christ as the method and means of cooperative ministry."

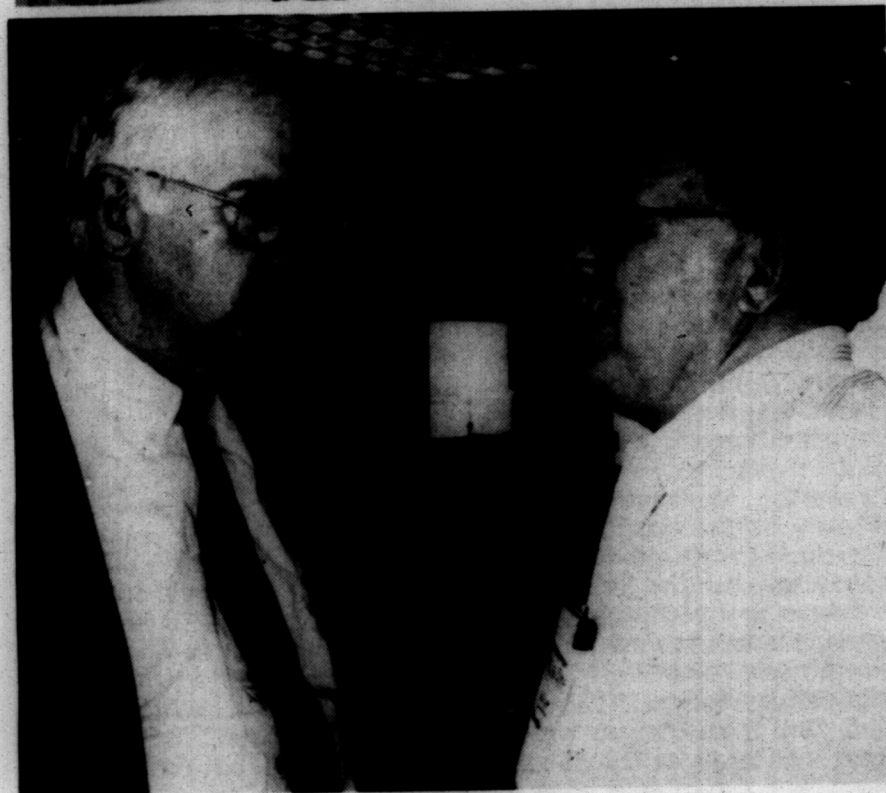
3) "Let each state convention renew its commitment to the centrality of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom as the basis for our mission."

4) "Let each state convention renew its commitment to religious liberty, and its corollary, the separation of church and state, and avoid being used as an instrument of or promoting any secular political agenda."

(See **MODERATES** on p. 9)



Larry Braidfoot (bottom photo, left), academic vice president and provost at William Carey College in Hattiesburg, discusses the implications of legalized gambling with Allen Rice of Michigan during the Gulfshore Assembly meeting of the National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling. John Landrum (left photo), chaplain to the Mississippi Beach, displays a casino industry magazine he uses to help keep his ministry responsive to gambling trends. (Photos by William H. Perkins Jr.)



Opponents form organization to battle legalized gambling

By William H. Perkins Jr.

The wave of gambling fever that seems to be overtaking the country prompted the Sept. 24 birth of the National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling at Gulfshore Assembly in Pass Christian.

Anti-gambling forces from across the country gathered at the behest of the Mississippi Baptist Convention's Christian Action Commission (CAC) to organize a solid front against the rush to legalize gambling in virtually all areas of the U.S.

Larry Braidfoot, academic vice-president and provost at William Carey College in Hattiesburg, battled gambling for years while working at the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. He warned of the long-term consequences of turning to gambling for short-term solutions, and he named two major villains.

"One is the gaming industry that siphons off dollars, and the other is the state, which is engaging in 35-40% taxation on leisure spending. Sooner or later, coast businesses will realize they are the

losers," he said.

Braidfoot described the state of mind that allows legalization of gambling to gain a foothold in local areas and said legalized gambling is "an enormous lie perpetrated to take advantage of victims."

"People are deluded; they think this an opportunity, when they have been selected as a dumping ground. This is a 'sucker' mentality," he pointed out.

John Landrum, who gave up a Southern Baptist pastorate on the coast to start the Chaplain to the Mississippi Beach ministry, and his wife, Linda, minister to casino workers and gamblers.

Expressing strong disapproval for gambling in any form, Landrum said, "Don't mistake our enthusiasm for this ministry as acceptance of the industry. If you set up this kind of ministry, you will be misunderstood."

Churches have varying perspectives on gambling because of diverse traditions, and many have "turned their backs" on people involved in the gambling industry, according to Landrum.

Critics have even questioned his motives in starting the ministry, he added.

Landrum said he has had to develop a special technique for ministering to casino employees and gamblers.

"If you attempt to tell them they are wrong, you've closed the door. Christians already know they're wrong, and non-Christians don't have any idea they are doing wrong," he explained.

Landrum said he is not allowed to distribute tracts in casinos, but he does hand out a lot of business cards from which many follow-up calls come.

Many of the calls are referred to Gamblers Anonymous, which was once struggling to maintain one chapter on the coast but will soon open its fourth chapter because of the spiraling number of problem gamblers, he said.

For information on the National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling and how to respond to the issue of legalized gambling in your area, contact CAC at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800.

Religious liberty limits die in Russian Parliament

WASHINGTON (BP) — One Russian Orthodox scheme to shut evangelicals out of the future of Russia was buried this week with the corpse of the Russian Parliament, but other proposals are sure to follow.

That's the word from Gleb Yakunin on the fate of Parliament and its effect on the proposed legislation to limit religious liberty in Russia.

Yakunin, an Orthodox priest and Parliament member, is in Washington with another reformist lawmaker, Lev Ponomarev, searching for deep pockets and activists to back the nation's move toward democracy.

But 136 of 250 Parliament members met and declared Vice President Alexander Rutskoi as the nation's acting president in what Yakunin and others call a suspicious and invalid election.

Ponomarev told Baptist Press he believes the Parliament to be elected in December will abolish

strict proposals against religious freedom, which were passed twice by lawmakers but never signed into law by Yeltsin. The limits would have given police and others power to regulate non-Orthodox Russians and ban foreign missionaries from spreading the gospel.

In a lecture at Catholic-founded Georgetown University in Washington, Yakunin criticized the Russian Orthodox patriarch for resorting to state controls on religion to compete with growing evangelical groups. "Russian Orthodoxy chose the easiest way, instead of going to the people," he said.

When Orthodox leaders complained about American evangelist Billy Graham's success in Russian crusades, Yakunin said he told them:

"I don't remember him telling anyone to switch denominations; I remember him just trying to preach the word of Christ."

Anti-alcohol organizations from 22 states met Sept. 21-23 at Gulfshore Assembly in Pass Christian to plot strategies and share ideas on how to stem ever-increasing tolerance for the problem drug across the country.

The annual meeting of the American Council on Alcohol Problems (ACAP) was hosted by the Christian Action Commission (CAC) of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, which arranged for the meeting to be held this year at the state Baptist-owned facility along the Gulf Coast shoreline.

Speaker after speaker from states and organizations represented at the meeting recounted the destructive effects of alcohol and called on the group to provide

leadership in the campaign to control alcohol in the U.S.

United Methodist Bishop Felton May, who heads his church's task force on drug abuse and violence, pointed out that alcohol poses a special abuse problem because of its widespread acceptance in America.

"Alcohol is a national phenomenon. No community is untouched. This is a spiritual problem; we must call together all Christ-loving denominations to bring their considerable resources to bear," he said.

May related his grief at the human degradation he sees in the U.S. caused by alcohol and other abused drugs — degradation he said is unmatched in poorer, more primitive parts of the world he has visited.

"They are enslaved to the bottle.... You can become 21st century emancipators. Could it be that God is saying, 'Let my people go?'" he said, to a standing ovation.

Several ACAP state directors reported success in convincing legislators to drop the legal blood-alcohol limit from .1 to .08 for a driving under the influence charge, with even tighter limits for underage drinkers.

David Schneider, state director for Kansas, recounted the tragic story of a Kansan who mangled his face in a botched shotgun suicide attempt after beating his girlfriend to death in a drunken rage. He suggested the proven link

between crime and alcohol abuse should be spotlighted.

"Crime is a hot button issue right now. This will shift public opinion rapidly," he said.

Each morning session began with a Bible-based devotion woven around the theme of the meeting, "The Rising Tide." Subjects included the personality of alcohol (Prov. 20:1), the problem of alcohol consumption (Prov. 23:29-20, 33-35), and the prevention of alcohol problems (Prov. 23:31-32).

Workshops included information on how to write fund-raising letters; orientation to the work of ACAP; legal advice for non-profits; and getting churches involved.

Southern Baptists were recognized for their contributions to the anti-alcohol campaign. C. Ben Mitchell, who handles alcohol issues for the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, was given the 1993 ACAP Distinguished Service Award for his work in the field.

The Clarence True Wilson Christian Leadership Award was given to May, while the William N. Plymat Temperance Award was given to Tennessean Herman L. King, who has been active in the temperance movement for over 60 years.

For more information on ACAP and how to combat alcohol abuse, contact CAC at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800.

CBF meets in Hattiesburg

Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler will be the featured speaker for the state's fall Cooperative Baptist Fellowship meeting Oct. 9 in Hattiesburg at University Church. Furloughing CBF missionary Paul Thibodeaux also will address the meeting.

Crumpler, retired executive director of the SBC Woman's Missionary Union, will discuss the status of the WMU and future directions of CBF missions. Thibodeaux will provide a perspective on mission work in Eastern Europe.



May

Committee begins its study of SBC theological education

NASHVILLE (BP) — A nine-member committee assigned to review the Southern Baptist Convention's approach to theological education began its work Sept. 22 with a 9 a.m.-9 p.m. meeting in Nashville.

Committee chairman David Hankins of Louisiana said most of the day involved input from and discussions with the presidents of the SBC's six seminaries and the executive directors of the SBC Education Commission and Seminary Extension.

The committee will "evaluate what is going on in theological education in SBC life with regard to scope, methodology, and funding... to help develop long-range strategic planning for theological education in SBC life," Hankins said.

The committee will "take a look at the seminaries as a whole," he said, "as opposed to individual seminaries and their individual long-range planning."

Also, the committee will "examine any areas of conflict between the seminaries and other theological entities," Hankins said.

A paper presented to the committee by the six seminary presidents included the following points:

— "No other denomination has developed the pattern of close cooperation experienced among the seminaries of the Southern Baptist Convention," they wrote, "nor the relationship of unity and purpose which exists between the seminaries and the denomination." Governance of the seminaries by SBC-elected trustees "should be preserved and protected against compromise or alteration."

— No "single board of governance" should be created, the presidents wrote, noting separate trustee boards for each seminary "are deeply invested in the life and work... and are highly committed to the mission and purposes of the schools."

— No new seminaries are needed, the presidents wrote, maintaining future needs of the SBC can be met by the seminaries and sister SBC institutions working together in a strategy for theological education.

— Residential campuses with full-time resident faculty and facilities for libraries and other resources offer "the most effective programs of ministerial education," the presidents maintained. They added, "... the experience of studying and living among fellow seminary stu-

dents — fellow God-called ministers — is priceless and powerful."

— Off-campus theological education centers, however, are "a necessary and effective means of taking Southern Baptist theological education to those who otherwise would not benefit from such training," the presidents stated. Such centers have "allowed Southern Baptists to reach into the inner cities and rural areas, and to offer essential training to persons from ethnic minorities and language groups."

Members of the theological education study committee, in addition to Hankins, are Stan Adamson, professor at Southwest Missouri University, Springfield; Bob R. Agee, president of Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee; William E. Bell, dean at Dallas Baptist University; Paul R. House, professor at Taylor University, Hartford City, Ind.; Roy L. Honeycutt, president emeritus of Southern Seminary; Ned Lee Matthews, pastor of Parkwood Church, Gastonia, N.C.; James G. Merritt, pastor of First Church, Snellville, Ga.; and, ex-officio, Fred H. Wolfe, pastor of Cottage Hill Church, Mobile, Ala., and chairman of the Executive Committee.

Alabama paper's spin kindles discussion

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP) — A daily newspaper's spin on an Alabama Baptist news release has opened up discussion of the question of Christian salvation.

The first paragraph of a front-page article in *The Birmingham News* on Sept. 5 declared: "More than 1.86 million people in Alabama, 46.1% of the state's population, will be damned to hell if they don't have a born-again experience professing Jesus Christ as their savior, according to a report by Southern Baptist researchers."

The article spawned controversy in Alabama, which prompted a Sept. 17 Associated Press story that was carried by CNN Headline News and newspapers and radio stations across the country.

David Reid, the Alabama convention's associate for public relations, first wrote a news story for the July 22 issue of *The Alabama Baptist* dealing with county-by-county statistics developed by the Home Mission Board, based in part on a survey of U.S. church membership coordinated by the Catholic Glenmary Research Center in Atlanta.

Reid said his news release did not mention any specific denomination except Southern Baptists and did not depict Baptists as the only "saved" people. He said the news release focused only on overall county populations.

The flap also "illustrates how the phenomenon of political correctness operates," Reid said. "It is

not politically correct to say that Christianity — a relationship with Jesus Christ — is the only way to be rightly related to God."

News religion writer Greg Garrison told Baptist Press his story "never implied Baptists think they are the only ones going to heaven."

Garrison also said, "To say that one believes in evangelism to save souls and yet sidestep the issue of what happens to the unsaved or how they feel is not a full discussion of salvation. For a Baptist Press release on a study of the saved and lost to sidestep the issue of damnation is fine, but I explored it more thoroughly — which touched a raw nerve among both saved and lost."

Miss. missionary physician will address Royal Ambassadors, Mississippi College

Medical missionary B. Earl Hewitt Jr. will be the featured speaker for 1993 Royal Ambassador (RA) Day Oct. 9 at Mississippi College in Clinton, according to officials of the Brotherhood Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB).



Hewitt

Hewitt will speak in the coliseum on campus following the Mississippi College vs. North Alabama College football game. RA's

will also hear music and testimonies, and have an opportunity to meet the MC football players and cheerleaders.

Hewitt, 39, received his medical degree from University Medical Center in Jackson and attended Southwestern Seminary before being appointed by the Foreign Mission Board (FMB) to the African nation of Ghana, where he served as a physician at the Baptist Medical Centre in Nalerigu. The Summit native also served in Thailand and Nigeria as well as at the Cary (Miss.) Christian Health Center, a ministry of the Luke Society, and as a contract physician for the Mississippi State

Board of Health.

Hewitt, following FMB policy, resigned earlier this year to marry Mona Johnson of Little Rock, Ark. The couple will seek reappointment by FMB after a one-year waiting period.

RA Day is open to all boys in grades 1-12 and their leaders. Cost is \$7.50 per person, which includes a meal, admission to the football game and the program afterward, and supplemental insurance. Registration deadline is Oct. 4, and no refunds for the cost of the meal can be made after Oct. 6.

For more information, contact the MBCB Brotherhood Department at (601) 968-3800.



Weaver McCracken (right), associate in the MBCB Student Work Department, interviews student summer missionaries (from left) Judy Jenkins, of Hinds; Mark Davis of Delta State, Becky Courtney of Delta State, and Chris Brown of MC. Brown, who worked in Zimbabwe, said "I got to see people's lives changed and get turned on for the Lord." He said the team of student missionaries saw 393 people make professions of faith. McCracken said the entire Mississippi contingent of student missionaries reported a total of more than 800 professions of faith.

'93 Student Conference brings 900 to Jackson for workshops, Watson

By Tim Nicholas

The annual College Student Conference, held at First Church, Jackson, last weekend, drew 900 students from 34 campuses. Sponsored by the Student Work Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, the meeting featured adoption of a 1994 student missions budget, plenary speakers, and 32 workshop sessions. The program closed with a concert by Wayne Watson that sold about 2,000 tickets.

The students, primarily participants in the Baptist Student Unions on college campuses around Mississippi, voted to raise among themselves this school year \$95,044. That amount, donated entirely by the students, will go with a missions balance of \$21,261 from 1993 to support a total of 80 students in home and foreign summer missions next year.

Foreign service opportunities include Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Zimbabwe (where Mississippi Baptists have a missions partnership).

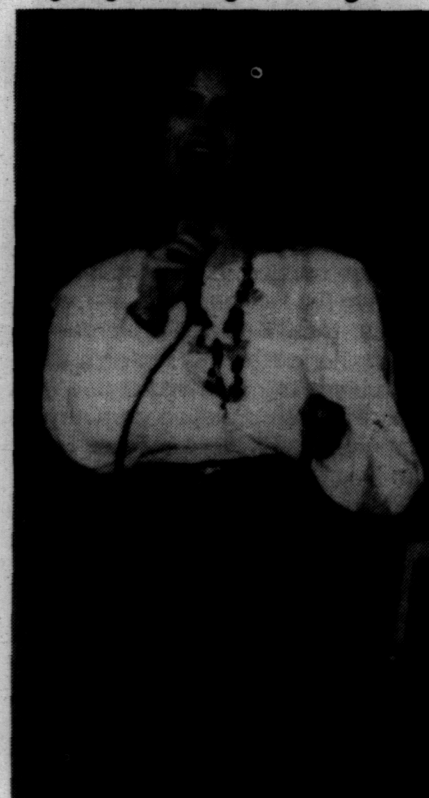
Home missions places of service will include Alaska, California, Iowa, Hawaii, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Oklahoma, Virginia, and West Virginia.

In addition, student funding will send \$750 each to Rodney Dabbs in Worcester, Mass., and Stacy Broadwater in California. Dabbs is a Mississippi State graduate working as a US-2er. Broadwater is a University of Southern Mississippi graduate working as a Mission Service Corps student worker.

Another area of student funding will be \$11,200 for short-term mission projects for up to 16 campuses making requests.

Among the plenary speakers were Dan Yeary, pastor of North Phoenix Church, Phoenix, Ariz.; and Dennis Swanberg, pastor of First Church, West Monroe, La.

Swanberg told the story from Matthew 14 of Simon Peter trying to walk on the water to Jesus. He said that after he sank and took Jesus' hand, he walked on water again. Taking the theme of the conference, "Act Justly, Love Mercy, Walk Humbly" (Micah 6:8), Swanberg said that in walking with Jesus He'll take you "some places, perhaps, you've never gone before." He added that God's grace is real, even with one failure after another "he lets you begin again and again and again."



Karen Redd sings "He's Watching Over Me" at the College Student Conference. First Church music minister Larry Black, who introduced Redd, explained the song has a special meaning to Redd because she was nearly killed a few years ago in an attack by a Chow dog. She managed to get a baseball bat and broke the dog's neck, then drove herself to the hospital before passing out. (Photos by Tim Nicholas)



Board of Ministerial Education

Ernest Turcotte, left, presents a plaque to J.M. Wood, minister of music at Broadmoor Church, Jackson, to honor Wood for his service as outgoing president of the Board of Ministerial Education, Mississippi Baptist Convention. (Photo by Tim Nicholas)

WMU to distribute prayer book for CBF

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP) — Woman's Missionary Union has announced details of an agreement made with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship to distribute a customized edition of the book *Operation World*, scheduled for release by Oct. 1.

Operation World, written by Patrick Johnstone and published by Zondervan Publishing House, is being revised and reprinted. The CBF has arranged with Zondervan to print a customized version of the book. *Operation World* is a day-by-day prayer guide focusing on the entire world.

WMU has agreed to take orders for and distribute the customized copies of the book for CBF. WMU will keep the revenue generated from the sales of the book to cover

the costs of order processing and distribution.

Promotion of the book will be handled by CBF. WMU will not promote the book through any WMU materials.

The agreement with CBF falls within guidelines established by the WMU executive board last January, WMU officials said, when the board voted to allow WMU to consider requests to produce and handle missions materials for other evangelical groups. Those materials would be tailored for use by such groups and sold separately to them. The WMU, in explanatory materials accompanying the executive board action, noted WMU would not provide any financial support for the CBF or promote its offerings.

Southern Baptist chaplain faces discharge hearings

ATLANTA (BP) — Discharge hearings began in this month for a Southern Baptist Air Force chaplain who questioned the use of military force in the Persian Gulf.

Lt. Col. Rob Robertson, 47, was endorsed by the Southern Baptist chaplains commission in 1983. The Mississippi native currently is stationed at Dyess Air Force Base, Abilene, Texas.

Huey Perry, Home Mission Board director of chaplaincy, said Robertson "is still in good standing with us. We have no basis to withdraw his endorsement."

The hearings will be held by a military judge and a panel of three

officers. Their recommendation to discharge Robertson or allow him to retire will move through military channels until it reaches the secretary of the Air Force who makes the final decision, Lew Burnett, HMB director of military chaplaincy, said. Robertson has 26 years of active and reserve military duty, including service as a pilot in Vietnam for which he received the distinguished flying cross for heroism in combat.

He left the military in 1976 to pursue a master of divinity and doctorate in ethics from Southwestern Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. He returned to the Air Force as a chaplain in 1982.

New Mexico's J.B. Fowler to retire from state paper

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (BP) — J.B. Fowler Jr., editor of the *Baptist New Mexican* for 13 years, will retire effective Jan. 31, 1994.

Fowler, 63, said he will take early retirement with plans to move to San Antonio, Texas. With accrued vacation time, Fowler actually will leave the editorship in mid-December.

"I have enjoyed working with

New Mexico Baptists and... my relationship with Baptist Press and fellow state editors," Fowler said.

Fowler is a native of Pawhuska, Okla., and has called Odessa, Texas, his home. Prior to assuming his current post in January 1981, Fowler was pastor of *First Church, McComb*; and churches in Lubbock, Ballinger, Van, and Moran, all in Texas.

Partnership report —

Mississippi volunteers head for disaster relief missions, Honduras

By Tim Nicholas

Mississippi Baptists are getting a jump on their missions partnership with Honduras, slated to begin in 1994, with an immediate response to damages caused by Hurricane Gert, according to Paul Harrell, Mississippi Brotherhood director.

The type of response was determined by Jim Didlake of the Brotherhood Department staff and Reggie Quimby of Alabama, who traveled to Honduras early last week to jointly evaluate needs along with Larry Elliott. He is the Southern Baptist missionary who coordinates disaster relief for the Baptist Mission in Honduras.

With 30,000 displaced by flooding in Northern Honduras, Mississippi Baptists are joining with three other state Baptist groups to send personnel and supplies, including field kitchens, to San Pedro Sula, El Progreso, and Porta Cortez.

Working in concert with the Brotherhood Commission and the Foreign Mission Board, the Mississippi Brotherhood Department

is fielding two teams. On Sept. 24, a team of four went to El Progreso to operate and train nationals to operate a field kitchen. Primarily they will be cooking beans and rice. Rice cookers, offering speedy cooking, were sent from Hawaii to Mississippi, and then to Honduras.

Volunteers on the cooking team are Sammy Platt, a Columbus layman; William Wright, pastor of Goss Church; Ronald Ballard, director of missions for Carroll/Montgomery Association; and Jerald Welch, DOM for Holmes, Humphreys, and Leflore associations. Ballard, a former missionary to Paraguay, speaks Spanish.

The team took about 2,500 lbs. of supplies. Estimates of 1,000-1,500 persons per meal were to be fed. Food was to be provided through the FMB's disaster relief response.

A Mississippi medical response team left Sept. 26 with about \$3,000 in supplies to fight dysentery, malaria, and, as reported in Southern Honduras last week,

more than 100 cases of cholera.

Medical team members are Peggy Golden, R.N., Jackson; Dot Ray, R.N., Pontotoc; Terry Meadows, M.D., Mendenhall; Victor and Peggy O'Conner, Raymond; and Norman Bailey, Hattiesburg.

Alabama, Tennessee, and Texas were fielding two disaster response teams and providing field kitchens and water purifying units along with a Brotherhood Commission water unit.

Cost of the Mississippi-Honduras disaster work is estimated to be \$20,000. Harrell said that the opportunity coming during the Margaret Lackey state missions emphasis points out the fact that needs can be met through special offerings.

Mississippi volunteers were scheduled to remain in Honduras through the end of this week. Another Mississippi team was on standby. Present plans are for the nationals to continue feeding up to six weeks.

Nicholas is director, Office of Communication, MBCB.

USM professor ministers with field missionary as video consultant

James L. Hall, associate professor of Radio, Television, and Film at the University of Southern Mississippi, and member of University Church, Hattiesburg, served as a volunteer missionary with the Japan Baptist Mission in Tokyo, July 1-Aug. 10. His Foreign Mission Board project assignment was to teach video production at the Baptist Media Center and to serve as a technical advisor and consultant to Delane Tew, career missionary.

Tew, director of the Baptist Media Center, requested assistance in preproduction, production, and postproduction areas of videography. The Baptist Media Center, with a staff of five, provides print media support to field missionaries assigned to the mission. Video production is a recent addition to the center's capabilities.

"While I was in Tokyo on a brief business trip last March, I discovered there was a need for professional training in video production at the Baptist Media Center," Hall explained. "Delane Tew and Mark Edlund, head administrator for the mission, asked if I could serve as a volunteer missionary this summer. I took the matter to the congregation at UBC, and they overwhelmingly approved my proposed project."

Within a few weeks the University congregation raised funds to pay the airline and other travel expenses, and provided additional monetary support for meals during the five-week period Hall worked in Tokyo.

Dick Allison, pastor of University Church, led the congregation in the fund-raising effort. "We are

privileged that we could participate in a Foreign Mission Board volunteer project this year," Allison said. "We're investigating the possibility of setting up a permanent line item in our annual budget that will be designated for helping defray expenses of a volunteer missionary."

While in Tokyo, Hall supervised the Media Center staff in the production of a short video that will be used by a field missionary to introduce new prospects to the concept of church.

"We attempted to answer three questions," Hall explained. "What is church?; what is worship?; and why do Christians need to attend church?"

Tew wrote the Japanese script,

served as both camera person and video editor for the project. Also, Hall directed a studio production, "The Story of Noah," using a Japanese storyteller and flannel board characters.

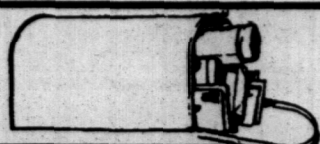
"We wanted to see if the flannel board technique could be adapted for video production use in elementary Sunday School classes. We think it worked, and now the center is planning a series of short videos using a storyteller and flannel board characters that will augment Sunday School lessons," Hall added.

"The work was extremely rewarding," Hall said. "Working with our SBC missionaries in Japan was a memorable experience."

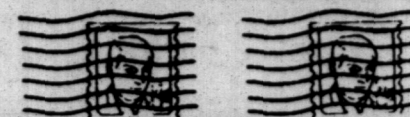


WMU hosts executive directors

Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union hosted the state executive directors Sept. 18-19 in Birmingham for an orientation and update. Bill Causey, left, joined by his wife Charlotte, was one of the 29 executive directors who attended. WMU Executive Director Dellanna O'Brien, right, welcomed the group and led the briefing sessions. (WMU photo by Dan Bryan)



Letters to the editor



Tired of justifying Editor:

This is in response to the letter from Maudaline Pepper in the Sept. 2 issue of *The Baptist Record*. Let's set the record straight. I am tired of people trying to justify Bill Clinton's actions and his sin! Don't insult my intelligence by telling me that I am "biblically incorrect" because I view Bill Clinton as a sinner. He is wrongfully trying to force homosexuality and abortion on the true Christians of this nation.

You want Scripture? Read the following:

"It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness" (Prov. 16:12).

"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20).

"He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord" (Prov. 17:15).

"And have no fellowship with the works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11).

"The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! For they have rewarded evil, unto themselves" (Isaiah 3:9).

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own

lust shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears" (2 Tim. 4:2-3).

"It is better to hear the rebukes of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools" (Eccl. 7:5).

We must also realize that just because Billy Graham is Billy Graham doesn't always make him right. I pray for Bill Clinton because he is a sinner and he is wrong. I wish for no man to go to hell!

Alton Nowell
Laurel

MC alum speaks out Editor:

Although I reside in Alabama, I am an alumnus of Mississippi College. For a long time, I have been greatly concerned about the leadership of my alma mater and as I read of the problems that are now being uncovered, I realize that many people in authority at MC, the Baptist convention, and the Education Committee refused to listen to Charles R. Wilbanks and did a great disservice not only to him, but more importantly to MC.

The people responsible for refusing to investigate these charges (MC board of trustees, Education Committee, and Mississippi Baptist Convention leadership) should also be investigated. It appears there might be a reason for their "turning their head the other way" when they were presented with certain information.

We need leaders in all the above

mentioned areas who are diligent in their responsibilities as trustees, etc.; people who are committed and determined that MC will be the kind of institution that it should be. The first requirement for leadership in a Baptist college is a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. If this is a true and honest relationship, then there will be no more problems of dishonesty and need for investigation.

Because I knew of the dishonesty and wrongdoing at the leadership level since the 1980s, I have been unwilling to make contributions to MC. I wonder how many other people feel as I do?

I think an apology is due Charles R. Wilbanks. If the information he tried to give the leadership had been acted upon, many years of wrongdoing and mismanagement would have been avoided.

Betty Campbell
Birmingham

Encourages donation Editor:

There is a young lady in Jackson who is very much in need of a kidney transplant. She has been waiting a long time for a donor, and has been kept alive by dialysis.

Many other people are waiting for various organs, and many of them will die because there are not enough donors to supply them.

However, there are many needed organs that every day are being thrown away, in effect, by people who are unaware of the need, or

are uncaring, or are in sense superstitious, or are uninformed, or for various other reasons.

Many people have such a fear of what others will think if they don't follow the customary rituals at the death of a family member, as well as often being in a state of not being able to think clearly, that they never consider the idea of allowing the organs of the member to be used to keep living persons alive. And, of course, they rarely think of giving permission for their own organs to be used.

Christians, of all people, ought to be willing to donate their body parts. There is nothing Christian about the idea of not wanting a loved one's body parts to be used to maintain someone else's life. The idea of preserving the dead body to keep it from decaying, and dressing it in fine clothes and placing it in an expensive casket, etc., is anything but Christian.

Some people seem to have the idea that the dead body must be embalmed so it can be resurrected when Jesus comes. Think a little! What about a Christian blown to nothingness on a battlefield? If the Lord is capable of resurrecting them, which he certainly is, why do we think we need our bodies preserved? Do you think the embalmed body and the costly casket will still be intact? What about the countless Christians whose bodies have not been embalmed?

My wife and I have written our permission for our body parts to be used in saving the lives of other people. We have also donated our bodies when dead, after usable organs have been removed, to the University Medical Center to be used to teach student doctors how to save other lives. When there is no further use for them we want them cremated. We don't care what they do with the ashes. We'll be gone home to be with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and with the other saints!

One last important statement: If we have it in our power to save lives and refuse to do it, aren't we responsible for their deaths? Read that sentence again and again! Ask the Lord what he wants you to do — but you have to be willing to be obedient or your prayer is a sham.

Joe G. Canzoneri
Jackson

What if Mary.... Editor:

In response to "Search the Word" (July 29 issue of *The Baptist Record*), I did search the Word. The writer of that letter is correct in saying that in the Old Testament a fine was to be paid to anyone who accidentally caused a woman to miscarry. The key word here is **accidentally**. If we turn to Deuteronomy 19:2-7, we learn that in the case of an accidental homicide of someone who was already born, there was not only no punishment (or fine), there was protection for the killer from the victim's family. What does that tell us about God's value of the unborn?

In Genesis 2:7, the Bible tells

us that Adam's first breath was breathed into him by God, and that this made Adam a living being. This passage is irrelevant to the issue of abortion for two reasons. First, Adam was never a fetus. Second, unborn babies begin to inhale and exhale amniotic fluid during the first trimester of pregnancy. Their cells begin to utilize oxygen immediately after conception. If air is the deciding factor (rather than oxygen), then we must conclude that fish aren't technically "alive."

Yes, most Baptists believe in having the freedom to make responsible choices for themselves, not for other people (born or unborn) and certainly not for God.

In Psalms 139:16, the psalmist tells us that all of our days were planned before any of them existed. Certainly this was true of John the Baptist, who (by the way) recognized Jesus while they were both still in the womb (Luke 1:39-44).

Approximately 2,000 years ago, a young, unwed woman became pregnant. The punishment for adultery in her country back then was death by stoning. Even after the angel's visit, can anyone doubt her feelings of fear and desperation upon learning of Joseph's plans to break their engagement? One has to wonder how different our lives would be today if there had been a local abortion clinic and a "Right to Privacy" for Mary.

Ed McDaniel, pastor
Trace Ridge Church
Ridgeland

Grateful Missourians Editor:

Missouri Baptists are grateful for the support and aid we have received from fellow Baptists! The response to our needs during this flood disaster has been overwhelming. Some are calling this the greatest national disaster ever experienced in the U.S.

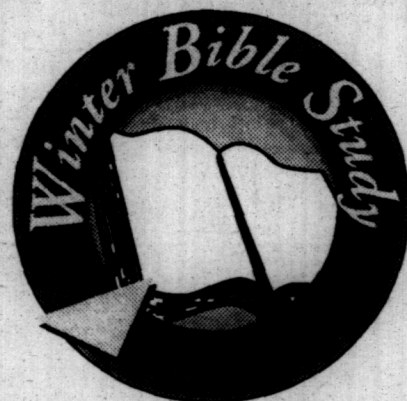
We are thankful for your support of prayer and inquiries. So many offers of help have come. Many of your people have been involved in the feeding operations and in the building of levees, filling sandbags, etc. People are arriving on the scene ready to work.

The needs are still great! Cleanup or "mud out" operations are taking place along the 1,000 miles of rivers that overflowed. Repair and rebuilding will be going on for weeks and months.

We will be needing lots of help by volunteer crews. Some of you are on standby waiting for assignments. Many of you have sent money and we are grateful! We still need much more to assist the hundreds of displaced persons and repair damaged homes and churches.

It is a wonderful thing to see Baptists and others working together. We are indebted to so many. Our coordinator for cleanup and repair is Don Anders. He can be reached at (314) 635-7931, ext. 514. Thanks!

Donald V. Wideman
Executive Director
Missouri Baptist Convention



It is time to seek the Lord

— Hosea 10:12, KJV

1994 WINTER BIBLE STUDY

(Formerly January Bible Study)

HOSEA: God's Redeeming Love

- Begin planning your '94 Winter Bible Study now.
- This is a personal invitation to Bible Study.
- Join us for an exciting look at God's Word for us today.

DATE: Tuesday, October 12

TIME: 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

PLACE: Baptist Building, Jackson

Teacher for adult leaders: Waylon Bailey, NOBTS, New Orleans

Teacher for youth leaders: Bob Metcalf, BSSB, Nashville

LUNCH: \$5.00 per person (payable in advance)

Books and materials may be purchased at the conference.

TO REGISTER: Call MBCB Sunday School Department,

(601) 968-3800 or Complete Form below.

Deadline is October 11, 1993.



Waylon Bailey

Registration Form
1994 WINTER BIBLE STUDY
October 12, 1993, Baptist Building, Jackson

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Church _____

Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Make check payable to Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, and return to
Sunday School Dept., P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

Just for the Record

Starting on Sunday, Oct. 3, Grandview Church, Pearl, will have Sunday School at 9:30 a.m., worship at 10:30 a.m., Discipleship Training at 5:30 p.m., and evening worship at 6:30. Wade Chappell is pastor.

Mississippi College School of Nursing will dedicate its new Garrison Learning Lab in memory of Harvey Garrison Jr., Oct. 4 in Crockcroft Hall at 2 p.m. Garrison, a deacon of First Church, Jackson, died in March of 1992. He was a past-president of the American Academy of Pediatrics who with his father established the Chil-

dren's Clinic in Jackson.

Mississippi College Library Special Collections Department will hold an open house on Oct. 6 from 3 until 5:30 p.m. in observance of the 1993 Archives Week. Included in the department are the collections of the Mississippi Baptist Historical Commission and of the Mississippi College Room. For more information, call Alice Cox at 925-3434.

The 13th annual "I Love America Day" will be celebrated at Mississippi College on Oct. 4. Mrs. Kirk Fordice, First Lady of

Mississippi, will be the chapel speaker at 10 a.m. in Swor Auditorium of Nelson Hall. A fireworks display will be held at 8 p.m.

The Department of Sociology and Social Work at Mississippi College will present Alan Keith-Lucas, noted author, educator, and social work practitioner, in a special workshop on campus Oct. 4-5. Cost is \$20 for each day; \$35 for both days. The workshop is approved for Continuing Education credit for social workers. The MC social work program is currently in candidacy status with the Council on Social Work Education.

EXEC. COMMITTEE

From page 3

and pastor of Cottage Hill Church in Mobile, Ala. The study committee was first proposed in a motion to the SBC in Houston by C.B. Hogue, executive director-treasurer of the California Convention.

Beyond seeking to increase the flow of dollars to the Cooperative Program, Wolfe said the study will examine "how we might be more cost-efficient with the ones we already have" and where various program statements need to be updated.

Executive Committee members approved as chairman of the study committee, Mark Brister, pastor of Broadmoor Church, Shreveport, La.; four Executive Committee members for the study, Ronnie W. Floyd, pastor of First Church, Springdale, Ark.; attorney Rex M.

Terry, a member of First Church, Fort Smith, Ark.; businessman William K. Hall, a member of Capistrano Valley Church, San Clemente, Calif.; and Robert L. Sorrell, associate pastor at Bellevue Church in suburban Memphis; and, along with Brister, two other study committee members, R. Albert Mohler, the new president of Southern Seminary, Louisville, Ky.; and businessman Greg Horton, a member of Temple Church, Simpsonville, S.C.

Executive Committee action to "decline to recommend" changing the SBC constitution to exclude churches that have ordained women was just one of 10 such votes by the committee on referrals from the SBC annual meeting in Houston.

Wolfe said most Executive

Committee members probably would be opposed to ordaining women but would regard it as a local church matter. "I do think our convention has spoken" against women's ordination through resolutions adopted at previous SBC annual meetings, Wolfe added.

Among "declined to recommend" referrals were limiting of agency severance benefits; Executive Committee member qualifications requiring minimum Cooperative Program contributions by their churches; tying the SBC Committee on Committees to people nominated by state conventions; requiring the SBC parliamentarian to be a member of a Southern Baptist church.

Hollinger is director, Tolston writes for Baptist Press.

Homecomings

Courtland (Panola): Oct. 3; dinner on grounds at noon; singing at 1 p.m.; G.E. Jolley, Batesville, guest speaker; Bonnie Smith, Batesville, and The Canaanlanders, music; Roy E. Southern, pastor.

Zion Hill (Cotiah): Oct. 3; 110th anniversary; services begin at 10:45 a.m.; dinner on grounds following services; cemetery day will be observed; Daryl Oster, pastor.

Weathersby, Mendenhall: Oct. 3; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; Farris Smith, DOM, Simpson

Association, guest speaker; dinner on the grounds, afternoon singing; Foy Killingsworth, pastor.

Moselle Memorial (Jones): Oct. 3; 10:30 a.m.; dinner on grounds, 11:30 a.m. afternoon singing; Arlie Spalding, Eastabuchie, speaker; youth of church, music; Michael Street, pastor.

East Side, Pelahatchie: Oct. 3; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; dinner in fellowship hall, noon; 1:30 p.m. singing; former pastors will speak; The Leaf River Boys, music; Rick Bounds, pastor.

First, Canton, observes 150th anniversary

First Church, Canton, will observe its 150th anniversary beginning Oct. 2 at 6 p.m., when former pastors will share memories with the church. A church-wide reception in the family life center will follow.

On Oct. 3, the church will hold a special worship service and receive recognition from the City of Canton, the State of Mississippi, and the Mississippi Baptist Historical Society.

A box lunch will be served at noon.

Harmontown celebrates 125th year

Harmontown Church, Lafayette Association, will celebrate its 125th anniversary Oct. 9, beginning at 5 p.m. with a fellowship and worship.

On Oct. 10, beginning at 10 a.m., former pastors and staff members will share memories with the church.

Barry Littlefield is pastor.

Revival Dates

Polkville, Morton: Oct. 3-6; Sunday, 11 a.m. and dinner on the grounds followed by afternoon service; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; James Messer, evangelist; Gene Rester, music; Fred Fowler, pastor.

Shady Grove, Hazlehurst: Oct. 3-6; Sunday, 11 a.m.; 7 each evening; John McCall, director of church relations, MC, evangelist; Rick Munn, First, Hazlehurst, music; Robert Netterville, pastor.

Fellowship, Lorman: Oct. 3-6; Sunday, 10:50 a.m., followed by fellowship meal; Howard Smith, DOM, Yazoo Association, speaker; 1:30 p.m. hymn-sing; Cornerstone Quartet, Port Gibson, guest singers; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; other speakers are James Busby, Bovina, Mon.; Mike Harrigill, Fayette, Tues.; Leslie Hicks, Port Gibson, Wed.; Hubert Stroud, Bovina, music; Judy Hynum, pianist; Charles Tyler, pastor.

Wilkinson Memorial, Ral-

eigh: Oct. 3-6; Sunday, 11 a.m., followed by lunch; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Carey Bass, Shady Grove (Smith), evangelist; Ronald Pursier, pastor.

Steele, Forest: Oct. 3-6; Sunday, homecoming, Sunday School, 10 a.m., worship, 11 a.m., John Sharp, DOM, Scott Association, guest speaker; covered dish luncheon in fellowship hall, noon; revival begins Sunday, 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.

First, Stonewall: October-fest revival, speakers are Roy Dabbs, Oct. 7, 7 p.m.; Jerry Doggett, Oct. 14, 7 p.m.; Danny Lanier, Oct. 17-20, regular times on Sunday; Mon.-Wed., 10 a.m. and 7 p.m.; C.C. Burns, Oct. 21, 10 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Albert McMullen, pastor.

Lone Pine, Canton: Oct. 7, 8, 10; Thurs. and Fri., 7 p.m.; Sunday, 10:50 a.m.; James E. Pugh Jr., evangelist; John Atchley, pastor.

MasterLife workshop set for Parchman, November

A MasterLife Workshop is scheduled for Nov. 11-13 and 18-20 at the Parchman Prison Ministry Center. The event is sponsored by the Cooperative Missions and Discipleship and Family Ministry departments of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

The workshop will follow the format of a traditional MasterLife certification session, but will include special training related to teaching in a prison setting. The event is open to any individual wanting to achieve MasterLife certification.

Leaders for the two-weekend event are Larry and Linda Goff of Ellisville. Goff is Baptist Student Union director at Jones County Junior College and Prison Ministry Coordinator for the MBCB's Discipleship and Family Ministry Department.

Both weekends will include ses-

sions on Thursday and Friday, 6-9 p.m., and Saturday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Cost, including MasterLife materials, is \$95.20. Registration information should be sent to the Discipleship and Family Ministry Department by Oct. 25.

A \$50 scholarship is available to individuals willing to lead a MasterLife group through the Parchman Prison Ministry. Interested individuals should contact Neron Smith, consultant with the Cooperative Missions Department.

Both departments may be contacted by writing MBCB, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205; phone (601) 968-3800.

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Coalition of Hope aims at state support

NASHVILLE (ABP) — The Coalition of Hope — a group which says it wants to end division in the Southern Baptist Convention by focusing on missions — is urging the formation of state-level organizations related to their national movement.

The Coalition of Hope's coordinating workgroup met with state Baptist convention leaders Sept. 20, seeking support for its effort to "call Southern Baptists... to new levels of missions commitment and accountability in response to God's fresh call to world evangelism."

Rodney Osborn, a Peoria, Ill., physician and the workgroup's convener, asked about a dozen state convention executive directors and presidents to facilitate the creation of state-level workgroups which would send representatives to a national convocation this spring.

The Coalition of Hope is an outgrowth of a research project headed by Lloyd Elder, retired president of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Elder's proposals would involve state conventions in the nomination of half the persons to serve on SBC boards, commis-

sions, and committees. The SBC president now directs the process through the appointment of a nominating committee.

Osborn told state leaders Sept. 20 he hopes local workgroups will examine the level of support among churches in their states for the Cooperative Program, Southern Baptists' unified giving plan, and suggest ways to remodel the denomination to increase contributions to it.

Support for the Cooperative Program has declined in recent years, due in part, say some observers, to the continuing denominational unrest.

But at least two state executive directors expressed reservations with the workgroup's request. Reginald McDonough of Virginia and Roy Smith of North Carolina said such a study would be perceived as an attempt to embarrass conservative Southern Baptist leaders, some of whose churches give only a small percentage of their mission gifts through the Cooperative Program.

"It would be hard to get a group together" if some state leaders believed its aim is to criticize SBC leaders, he said.

Thursday, September 30, 1993

Staff Changes

Ken Alford, pastor of Morrison Heights Church, Clinton, has resigned to accept the pastorate of Bell Shoals

Church in Brandon, Fla. He has pastored the Clinton church for seven years and the church has consistently been in the top 10 churches of Mississippi in baptisms.

Alford has served as president of the state Pastors' Conference and is a popular conference speaker. He will begin his ministry with the Tampa area church on Oct. 17.



Names in the News

James D. Whittington is retiring from Byram Church after 38 years as a pastor in Mississippi, Louisiana, and Kentucky. He is now available for interim, supply, revivals, conferences, and a pastorate. He may be reached at (601) 373-4975.

Missionary News

Earl and Marjorie Kelly left for Okinawa on Sept. 28 and will return Feb. 4, 1994. They can be reached at Koza Baptist Church, P.O. Box 31, Okinawa City 904, Japan. The phone numbers are parsonage, 011-81-989-33-3032; church, 011-81-989-37-5036; and fax 011-81-989-38-2527.

Olive Lawton, one of this century's near-legendary women of Southern Baptist missions in China, died Sept. 18 at age 92. Born in China to missionary parents, she returned as a missionary in 1924. She taught, worked with churches, braved civil war, and endured Japanese invasions. She was interned in a Japanese concentration camp for more than eight months, then sent home to the U.S. She went back to China after the war, but communism forced her to transfer in 1950 to Taiwan — one of the first Southern Baptist missionaries to go there. She helped establish churches in several cities and kept up a rigorous schedule until retiring in 1965.

Tim Lindwall, son of Southern Baptist missionaries to Guatemala Ted and Sue Lindwall, died of leukemia Sept. 18 at Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas. At the time of his death, Lindwall, 36, was a police officer and chaplain with the North Richland Hills, Texas, Police Department. He is survived by his wife, Karen, of Arlington; three children; his parents, who are on furlough in Arlington; and a brother, David.

BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 2

First, Louisville, hosts media library workshop for Winston Association

"How To Process Media" is the title of a workshop to be held for church media library workers in Winston Association Oct. 9, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Barbara Freese, consultant in the Church Media Library Program at the Baptist Sunday School Board, will lead the workshop.

Juanita Hight, TACMO (The Associational Church Media Organization) director in Winston Association, invites other church media library workers in surrounding associations to take advantage

of this training event.

Another recent association workshop for Church Media Library workers was held at First Church, Columbus, Sept. 18. There, Floyd Simpson led a book repair conference. Simpson is an editor and consultant with Church Media Library Program, Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville.

For more information on the Winston Association workshop, or to notify Hight of your attendance at the workshop, contact First Church, Louisville, (601) 773-6246.

Black Jack Church celebrates milestone

Black Jack Church, Vaughan, will celebrate its 150th anniversary Oct. 10, from 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m. Lunch will be served, and services resume at 1:30 p.m.

The church was originally housed in the Black Jack Union Meeting House, so called because of the black jack oak logs used to construct the building. It was a structure used as an itinerant school and worship house by all faiths of settlers flocking to the new territory of Mississippi in the 1830s.

The meeting house was claimed by a group of Baptists as its worship center in 1843, who worshipped there until 1853.

Several pastors of Black Jack Church served Mississippi Baptists at the state convention level. Among those were: A.J. Hackett, as editor of *The Baptist Record*; R.A. Venable, as president of Mississippi College; and A.V. Rowe, as secretary of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. Present pastor is Mike Bridges, who went to Black Jack in 1989.

MODERATES

From page 3

5) "Let each state convention confess that there have been far too many unethical actions in Southern Baptist political movements, resolve that such actions will not be tolerated in its life and work, and renew its commitment to truth and integrity which ultimately will result in a renewal of love and trust among all Southern Baptists."

While not advocating centralized political organizations for the state conventions, Daniel Vestal, pastor of Tallowood Church in Houston, said, "I do want the state conventions to be free — free of Southern Baptist control, free of secular political control, and free to pursue whatever it is that state convention wants to pursue. That's the Baptist way."

At present, Vestal said, "Frankly, the Southern Baptist Convention has become — is — the most significant institutional platform in this country for the religious right. And the effort will be to turn the state conventions into the same thing."

Baugh, retired founder of Sysco Foods, in his comments said SBC conservatives have targeted state conventions, seeking "assurance of a continuance of a major flow of money to Nashville," control of speakers selected for evangelism conferences, Baptist newspapers, and colleges, and "arbitrary control of pension monies," which,

under a "radical"-right U.S. government, someday could be opened to political manipulation.

Calling for a restoration of "Christian integrity in the leadership of our denomination," Baugh said, "If Baptists spoke only truth to and about one another, there would be no controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention."

The "first great ungodly lie," Baugh said, was told during the 1970s, that "there's not one seminary professor who believes the Bible is true."

"But we sat there and said nothing," Baugh said. "Our fellow lay people heard that and said, 'They are going to ruin the faith of my children.'" Now, Baugh said, those same children attend SBC seminaries that are increasingly hiring professors "who will corrupt their faith."

Arthur L. Walker Jr., recently retired executive-director of the SBC Education Commission, told the group Baptist colleges and universities will be "a focal point" of takeover efforts — "every one of them" because of their role in providing educated Baptist pastors and lay leaders of the future.

Among other topics during the two-day meeting, the group discussed the struggle with conservatives in filling vacant pastorates in state conventions and various ways of learning which churches are vacant, helping ministers prepare effective resumes and prepare to handle inerrancy-related questions that may be posed by some pulpit committee members.



The Real Thing?

Dennis Johnson has helped start six churches since 1990. As director of church planting for the Baptist association, he is helping start Baptist work in more than 2,000 communities of Mexico City.

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YOUR BRIDGE TO THE WORLD

Israel or Palestine — Whose land is it, anyway?

By Mark Wingfield

(ABP) — While watching the endless news reports about the centuries-old struggle between Arabs and Jews for control of Palestine, American Christians may find themselves asking, "Whose land is it, anyway?"

The answer often depends on one's view of history and the Bible.

"The Palestinians were there before the Jews got there. But the claim of the Jews has been that 'God gave it to us,'" said James Heizer, history professor at Georgetown College, Georgetown, Ky.

The people who already were there — including ancestors of modern-day Palestinians — did not recognize the Israelites' unique claim to the land, he added.

"It goes back to Abraham," Heizer explained, referring to the Old Testament character. Jews claim God gave the land to Abraham and therefore to them since they are the descendants of Abraham through Isaac. However, Palestinians also claim ancestry to Abraham through Ishmael.

Ishmael was Abraham's son by Hagar, the Egyptian maidservant of Abraham's wife, Sarah. This story is recorded in Genesis 16. God's promise to give Abraham and his descendants the land of Canaan is recorded throughout Genesis.



When Abraham's descendants finally arrived in Canaan, the Bible reports, there were other people already living there. They are identified in Numbers 13 as Amalekites, Hittites, Jebusites, Canaanites, and Amorites.

Those names don't mean much in the struggle going on today, noted James Chancellor, associate professor of Christian missions and world religions at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky. The key parts of the argument come

from later periods of history.

Even in the glory years of Israel recorded in the Old Testament, the Israelites did not occupy the entire land, Heizer explained. "When Abraham's descendants moved there, they still lived in the hill country, not in the cities.... Even David didn't rule all of Jerusalem."

Jewish sovereignty over territories in the Middle East ended about 75 A.D., Chancellor said.

Then the Middle East territories went through centuries of occupation, conquering rulers and realignments. There were the Assyrians, the Greeks, the Romans, and the Turks, to name just a few.

By the first part of the 20th century, the British controlled much of the Middle East. Much of that land was occupied by Palestinians.

In 1947, through the United Nations, the British divided the land into independent Jewish and Arab states. The state of Israel was created on May 14, 1948.

"The people who were resident at that time, the Palestinians, never accepted the UN's authority to do that," Chancellor explained. "Many Palestinians were dispossessed in highly violent and highly unethical ways."

"Much of this really goes back to the British who promised the peoples of the Middle East self-

determination in exchange for their support in the war against the Turks. At the same time the British also were promising the Zionist movement in Europe an eventual homeland for European Jews."

In 1967, Israel took control of additional territory, including the Golan Heights, Sinai Peninsula, Gaza Strip, West Bank, and East Jerusalem.

Modern perspectives on who first had the land continue to differ.

"The Palestinians say, 'We were here first,'" Heizer explained. "'The fact that you (Israel) had a kingdom over here and you controlled the land for four or five centuries, does not give you the right to come back and control it in the middle of the 20th century.'"

But James DeLoach, a Baptist minister who has been active in support of Israel for decades, says he absolutely believes the Israeli claim to the land is superior because it is "the promise that God made to Abraham."

"God very specifically details and outlines the geographic boundaries," he said. "I believe the land biblically belongs to the nation of Israel."

Wingfield is news director, Kentucky WESTERN RECORDER.

Baptist representatives see hope for growth in peace pact

By Marty Croll

JERUSALEM (BP) — Southern Baptist workers in Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip sat glued to television sets Sept. 13 watching a handshake between two bitter enemies — Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat and Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

"This is one of those rare moments you'd never really have thought was going to happen in your lifetime, and it's happening," said Ray Hicks, Southern Baptist representative in the West Bank city of Bethlehem. "We're in shock. Really, we're in shock."

"There are so many people who have lost loved ones in the wars or in terrorist acts," said Southern Baptist representative Tom Hocutt of Birmingham, Ala., who has worked in Israel about 10 years.

"The way they seem to be looking at it is that... there's a hope for peace, that our sons and daughters don't have to be killed anymore. The mindset here has been that war is inevitable."

Southern Baptist representatives work with three kinds of people in the region. In Israel, workers relate to groups of Jewish believers in Christ and also to the Association of Baptist Churches, which includes eight churches of Israeli Arabs and two international congregations. In Gaza and the West Bank, representatives work with Palestinian Christians — many whose peers expectantly await a military conflict that will

return their land, Palestine, and its capital city, Jerusalem, to them.

Nancie Wingo, a Southern Baptist representative who came to Gaza about six years ago after 23 years in Lebanon, watched as people flooded the streets in celebration at 3 p.m. the day the peace accords were signed. After waiting out a strike called by militant Muslims who oppose Arafat and refuse to accept Israel's sovereignty as a nation, people "paraded through the streets," she said, "waving Palestinian flags and showing Arafat's pictures" — both acts previously not allowed by Israelis.

"I would say the majority of people here are crossing their fingers — very hopeful," added Wingo, of Fort Worth, Texas.

Wingo teaches English at a Baptist lending library, the Center of Culture and Light, in Gaza City. More peace could allow the library to stay open all day instead of just a few hours, increasing its

effectiveness and helping it reach more people. Other places in Gaza also need someone to teach English, but it's been too dangerous to travel as necessary.

In the West Bank city of Bethlehem, Southern Baptist workers Ray and Beverly Hicks likely will ask new Southern Baptist representatives to come help believers there. The danger of living and working in the volatile area has caused them to freeze two requests for career workers needed in the West Bank.

"If this holds... I think it will be a new day of openness; of being able to share without being nervous or fearful of whom you're talking to or what you're talking about," said Hicks, of Cincinnati. His wife is from Georgetown, Ky.

The Hickses have worked in the West Bank since 1987 and in the Middle East since 1979. They moved to Bethlehem two years ago. The church there just fin-

ished its building — the first Christian sanctuary built in either the West Bank or Gaza since the beginning of the Palestinian insurrection known as the Intifadah in 1987.

Southern Baptist work in the area has been struggling, a result of the distrust and hatred that has made it difficult to survive. "It's just been sort of hanging on," Hicks said.

Celebrators in the West Bank had been blowing horns and wav-

ing flags since the night before, he added. He described the scene as "a release" of emotion from people who have been unable to declare their identity for six years — when Israelis reacted against the newly formed Intifadah.

"I have said for years that until the PLO and Israel talk, nothing will happen, and it looks like something's happening now," Hicks said. "It's unbelievable. It's a new day here."

Croll writes for FMB.

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Uniform You can trust God



By Michael O'Brien
Genesis 15:1-16

Have you ever had difficulty trusting God? Perhaps you prayed a prayer which seemed to go unanswered and that led you to feel that God could not be trusted. Perhaps you stopped attending church, began to live a carnal life, and all the while blamed God! Let me remind you, God's promises are trustworthy! We may not understand his timing in answering our prayers, but God will keep his promises.

In Genesis 12:1, Abram received a call and a promise from God. This promise was one of grace. For some reason known only to God, a 75-year-old man was singled out by God to be blessed. We all may have ideas as to why, but the clearest answer remains grace!

Protection and reward (15:1). God speaks to Abram and assures him that he (God) is all the protection he would need as well as his reward. "Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield..." (v. 1b).

Jesus gave us that same promise. He continually calls us to himself and promises that he will never leave us alone. John's Gospel repeatedly quotes Jesus as saying "fear not" and "be not afraid." Jesus is also our promised reward. The reward God offers is not because of what we have done, but because of what Christ has done for us. Our reward is not some monetary reward or garland wreath. It is eternal existence in the presence of the Almighty!

Abram's complaint (15:2-3). Can you remember when you were a kid and really wanted something? You wanted it "right now." You did not understand that your parents' timetable was different than yours nor that they had your best at heart.

Listen to Abram. "O Sovereign Lord, WHAT CAN YOU GIVE ME since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus? You have given me no children; so A SERVANT in my household WILL BE MY HEIR" (vv. 2-3, emphasis added). Abram realizes his advancing years and with no male heir of his own, the "one born in his house" — even though not a kinsman — would become his heir. Eliezer fit into that category.

More than the stars (15:4-5). God is so good, so patient with his misunderstanding people. Had God not already told Abram in Genesis 12:2 that he was going to make him a great nation? But God listens to his stammering servant complain, then says, "Not so Abram. A servant of yours will not be your heir, but your very own son will be your heir" (v. 4, my paraphrase). God's intention was to bless his seed, not the seed of a slave living in his house. Do you sometimes feel that nobody is interested in you and what you have to say? Try God! He is interested in our complaints no matter how trivial they may seem to us. He cares. He hears. And he will respond.

In verse 5, God does something totally awesome for Abram. He paints him a beautiful picture. "Look up Abram. You see those stars. (I have the picture of a star-filled night.) That, my son, is how many offspring you are going to have." God blesses us so much more than we ever think possible. Someone has said, "The only limits that God has are the ones put on him by man." How true.

Abram believes (15:6). Abram's response to God was not a half-hearted, "Okay, whatever you say Lord." He believed and trusted in what God said. Are God's promises a reality for you? If not, believe as Abram believed and you will be clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

God's covenant (15:7-16). Although Abram truly believed God, he still wanted to know when it would become a reality. Space will not permit an in-depth look into God's covenant with Abram, but it was exactly what Abram needed to secure his faith in God's promises to him.

God tells us that his ways are different from our ways, that his thoughts are different than our thoughts. When we feel that God is not fulfilling the things in our life that we feel he ought to be about, remember Abram. God's timetable may be different from ours, but we can believe that he is at work and his plan will become reality. All we must do is listen, understand, and believe.

O'Brien is pastor, First Church, Lexington.

Bible Book God's mighty acts recounted



By Jewel P. Merritt
Deuteronomy 1, 3, 4

This week we begin our study of the book of Deuteronomy. In this book, Moses repeated the law given by the Lord at Mt. Sinai about 40 years earlier. We will find Moses' farewell addresses also. Last words of loved ones are remembered and treasured or regretted with sadness, as the case may be. Moses' words revealed his yearning and concern for these people he had loved and led these many years.

God's call to journey (1:6). Someone has said that those who refuse to learn from history are doomed to repeat it. In this his first of three addresses to the people, Moses reminded the people of their deliverance from slavery. He yearned for the people who stood before him now to remember their fathers' sin of unbelief. It seemed imperative to him that this younger generation not repeat the mistakes of their elders. Moses began with the Lord's call which had followed the giving of the law at Sinai. "You have stayed long enough at this mountain. Break camp and advance..." (1:6b-7a, NIV). These words to advance remind me of the repeated call of New Testament writers that the Christian life must be one of growth.

The people's refusal (1:29-32). You remember that when the Israelites arrived at Kadesh Barnea, 12 spies were sent into Canaan to report on conditions there. The people chose to believe the report of the 10 spies who looked only at the obstacles they faced. They had forgotten all God's miracles in Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea. They forgot Moses' words that God HAD GIVEN them the land already. They forgot God's leading them with the fire by night and cloud by day. They forgot how tenderly God had cared for them as an earthly father cared for and carried a young child. They did not believe God! Let's not criticize the Israelites too quickly. When new, challenging situations arise in our lives, do we remember that we serve the Lord God who is able? He is able to deliver, to lead, to protect. He is our loving Father who cares for us.

Moses' plea to enter the Promised Land (3:23-26). Four years ago this month our church completed a building program. We enlarged our sanctuary and education space in order to reach more people for our Lord. My husband and I were serving as volunteers in Israel at the time. Friends sent us church bulletins and newspaper clippings. Even though we rejoiced to be of service where we were, we longed to be a part of that happy time in Jackson, too. Moses had worked so many years and had been through numerous trials with the people. Because of Moses' own sin, God had refused to allow him to be the one to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land (Num. 20:6-12). This poignant plea of Moses (Deut. 3:23-25) and God's refusal to grant his request should serve as another reminder to us of how seriously God considers sin. (Christ's death on the cross should be the only reminder we ever need!) God graciously allowed Moses to view the Promised Land from the top of Mt. Pisgah.

God's power revealed to Israel (4:32-35). Think of some of the people God has used through the ages — Jacob, Moses, David, Peter, Paul, you, and me. Each had/has shortcomings and sins. But God in his mercy and grace used/uses all who are willing. When Moses considered the mighty works of God with the Israelites, he was moved to say nothing like that had ever occurred before. God's call may include testings, signs, wonders, wars, and great terrors or deeds (v. 34). The purpose in all this is to show "that the Lord he is God; there is none else beside him" (v. 35b). God still uses unlikely folks to do his work. His loving acts of mercy and grace in our lives should lead us to proclaim to others in word and deed, "There is none else beside him!"

Merritt is a member of First Church, Jackson.

Life and Work God cares!



By Mark A. Rathel
Isaiah 40:9-11, 25-31

A careful examination of creation through either a telescope or microscope produces an attitude of awe. The Milky Way galaxy alone contains several billion stars. The amount of information contained in a single human chromosome is approximately equal to 4,000 printed volumes of 500 pages each. The telescope and the microscope reveal the greatness of God.

Yes, the majesty of God is awe-inspiring. In reflection upon the power of God, Christians often ask the same question as the psalmist: "What is man, that thou dost take thought of him?" (Psalm 8). In Chapter 40, Isaiah the prophet joins two vital truths: God is a great God, and he cares.

The Lord is powerful and gentle (40:9-11). The theme of Isaiah 40 is comfort. A voice commands the people of God, represented by the city of Zion, to proclaim the comforting presence of God to others. God's people are to function as heralds by lifting their voice mightily, loudly, enthusiastically, and vigorously. The content of the message is simple: God is here.

God is worthy and capable of rule. The strength of God is demonstrated most clearly in his shepherd care for his people. The prophet mentions three specific caring actions of God. He tends his flock by tenderly feeding and providing all that is necessary for life. He carries the newborn lambs, the weakest members of the flock. Nothing can harm or separate the sheep from him; he is their protector. Finally, he leads the flock rather than drives them.

God has no equal (40:25-26). Israel's pagan neighbors worshiped the stars. In the doctrine of the ancient religion of astrology, the astral bodies controlled the affairs of men. Isaiah proclaimed the uniqueness of God. Yahweh controls the stars; therefore, he has no equal.

Rather than the stars controlling the affairs of men, God controls the stars. He alone conducts roll call. God's involvement in creation did not stop upon the completion of creation. God remains involved in creation through providence in maintaining order in creation — not one star is missing from his knowledge.

Isaiah's purpose in emphasizing the majesty of God is to comfort. If God can be trusted to rule creation, then certainly our lives can be entrusted to him.

God understands (40:27-28). In difficult experiences we gain little comfort by an emphasis on God's enthronement. When we hurt, we desperately need to know that God cares. On occasion, we may feel like our lives are hidden from God; that is, we feel God is not aware of our painful circumstances.

When we are despondent and do not feel that God cares, our God is too small. God is limitless. He is limited by neither time (he is eternal) nor space (his presence extends to the ends of the earth). We possess only a partial understanding of God; his ways are incomprehensible. Since we cannot fully understand, how can we say he does not care?

God makes specific promises (40:29-31). Many of the promises in the Bible are conditional. The precious promises of Isaiah 40 are limited to people who wait upon the Lord. According to Page Kelley, the basic meaning of the Hebrew term "wait" is "to wind or twist." The Hebrew term for rope is derived from this root word. Waiting upon the Lord means to let God be your lifeline, the means of escape.

God promises strength to individuals weary from the pressures of life. God promises might to individuals lacking the strength for life's daily task. At times, like an eagle, we may fly over the difficulties of life. On other occasions, we run, yet experience God's strength. The real test of our ability to wait upon the Lord, however, is our daily walk. As we expectantly wait upon the Lord, we experience his vitality.

Rathel is pastor, Bay Vista Church, Biloxi.

capsules

BAPTIST MEN'S RELIEF EFFORT EARNS 'MIRACLE MEN' REPUTATION: BUXTON, N.C. (BP) — "Send those 'Baptist Miracle Men' to help us," a woman's voice pleaded on the other end of the phone line. The resident's call was one of numerous requests for assistance heard by John Cullop, pastor of Cape Hatteras Baptist Church, N.C., during the week Hatteras Island received the brunt of hurricane Emily as the storm brushed the state's coast Aug. 31. "North Carolina Baptist Men gained a reputation as 'Miracle Men' because they were among the first groups to bring relief to the island communities," Cullop noted. "As they helped various residents, word passed quickly around the community." Cullop, on-site coordinator of North Carolina Baptist work crews, and volunteers who staffed the state convention's disaster relief unit stationed at a high school on the island, were inundated by requests for assistance. "North Carolina Baptist Men have been feeding the multitudes, as many as 6,900 persons a day," Cullop said. "They have been ministering to the people of Hatteras Island by cutting downed-trees, pulling debris to the roadsides, patching roofs, taking out soggy carpet, and repairing damaged trailers and homes."

HMB CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT AWARDED FOR \$13.5 MILLION: ATLANTA (BP) — The Home Mission Board's executive committee voted unanimously Sept. 14 to award a \$13,572,000 construction contract to Metric Contractors, Inc., Marietta, Ga., for construction of the board's new national office building. HMB President Larry Lewis told the committee he was delighted with bids for the project which were slightly lower than expected. "They were certainly an answer to prayer," Lewis said. Six firms submitted construction bids for the project ranging from Metric's low bid to a high bid of \$14.7 million. The project will be funded primarily from the sale of the board's present location near Atlanta's downtown which has already been sold. The new property is located in Alpharetta, Ga., a fast-growing suburb 22 miles north of the present site. Ground breaking ceremonies for the project will be Oct. 11 as part of the mission agency's regular fall board of directors meeting. Construction is expected to be completed by the spring of 1995 with dedication ceremonies in conjunction with the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta in June 1995.

CHURCH LOANS AVAILABLE FOR 6.95% INTEREST: ATLANTA (BP) — Loans with a three-year fixed interest rate of 6.95% — the lowest rate in 15 years — are available to Southern Baptist churches, the Home Mission Board's church loan division announced in September. The interest rate is available for new loans or refinanced loans for Southern Baptist churches to buy property or construct buildings for church use, said Bob Inlow, director of the church loans division. The interest rate will be adjusted after three years to reflect interest rates at that time. "This is a good time to refinance and an excellent way to build equity," said Bill Barner, director of the loan production department. Generally, churches which could recapture the closing costs within 18 months through lower payments would benefit from refinancing, Barner said. Information about loans from the Home Mission Board's church loans division is available by calling (404) 898-7200.

S.C. BAPTISTS SELL PROPERTY TO CONSTRUCT NEW BUILDING: COLUMBIA, S.C. (BP) — The South Carolina Baptist Convention's general board has sold almost a block of prime downtown Columbia real estate and announced construction of a new office-resource center along Interstate 126. B. Carlisle Driggers, executive secretary-treasurer of the convention, announced the downtown property, adjacent to the Governor's Mansion, was sold to the federal government for \$3.3 million dollars. Final documents were signed Sept. 15. It includes a 37,500-square-foot office building, a 6,700-square-foot retail building, two parking lots, and two undeveloped lots. The property covers nine-tenths of a block adjacent to the Strom Thurmond Federal Building. The convention will rent back the space for up to 14 months until its new facility is completed.

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx
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U MAB YEZZUMLZAMP O CODA IMPE HEI, PRUP
HA WEDA EMA UMEPRAG; UF O RUDA WEDAL
HEI, PRUP HA UWFE WEDA EMA UMEPRAG.

NERM PROGPAAM:PROGPH-SEIG

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Mark Fourteen: Thirty-Eight.

New Age movements demand little of followers, attract many

By Tim Nicholas

(This article is the last in a series of three on issues facing today's teens.)

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — The New Age movements circulating in America today offer "microwaveable spirituality," according to James Browning.

The Kansas City, Mo., pastor and former staff member with the Interfaith Witness Department of the Home Mission Board, said the movements — plural because they do not form a unified theology — are "culturally adapted to what middle Americans want."

What people want, Browning said, is low commitment. In New Age movements, "You don't have to join and pay a tithe or teach Sunday School."

Though many in the New Age movements are looking to share what they have, they are not evangelistic in the sense of evangelistic Christians, he said. "No one's going to knock on your door."

Instead, adherents say things such as "Come study at the institute"; "Come take this course"; "Learn about this technique"; said Browning. "It's more like a therapeutic relationship. You would pay them a fee, usually, and get back some kind of spiritual service."

Browning said he can see New Age movements as being attractive to young people "because you can be a seeker and pick and choose what you like. It speaks the language of our culture — high-tech, high-touch." He believes there are aspects of New Age movements that might be appealing to young people, but those movements are not necessarily aimed at young people.

To help educate Christian young people, however, Browning

has written a booklet published under the World Changers Resources imprint entitled "Read the Label Carefully: Separating New Age and Christianity." Jointly produced by Woman's Missionary Union and Brotherhood Commission, the booklet is one of a

"... New Age is a distortion of what I believe would bring fulfillment to people. They are honestly seeking, but seeking down the wrong path."

— James Browning

series of booklets dealing with issues facing teenagers of today.

The booklet outlines basic ingredients of New Age movements and suggests that readers genuinely listen to others involved in them.

"Your dialogue will pay off by building trust and demonstrating that you are really interested. Later, when you share your testimony, your friend will be more likely to listen to you," said Browning in the booklet.

When it comes to relating to someone in the New Age movements, Browning doesn't describe the tone of his booklet as "nasty" or "sarcastic." "I want to model a compassionate approach to people who are different from us."

The overall approach to anyone different by faith or culture has to be biblical, to be loving, to be modeled after the approach Jesus took to others, and to be sensitive to people's needs, he said.

"My primary approach is to listen and treat them as unique

human beings loved by God," Browning said. "I should be honest with them, and say I believe Jesus Christ is the Savior. I would never be ashamed of saying that to someone."

A lot of religious "streams" flow into New Age movements. One is Hinduism, Browning said, but filtered through American culture. For instance, Hinduism wouldn't have a concern for the physical world, such as interest in ecology, as do many New Age movements.

"I sometimes say it's 'Yuppie' Hinduism," he said.

New Age movements place themselves in opposition to two basic things — Christianity and secularism. Although he believes much of the positive morality of New Age move-

ments come from Christianity, opposition to Christianity comes because they see it as "an old, outmoded, outdated religion," Browning said.

"Secularism they would see as a bankrupt approach to life because it doesn't deal with the spiritual."

Browning said New Age movements have what he calls "dogmatic open-mindedness." The idea they convey is, "We're open and seekers, and as long as you're like us, you're OK. But if you're one of those nasty Christians, you're not OK."

Some adherents of New Age movements are in it for the money. Some are charlatans. Some are absolutely sincere, Browning said.

The movements are evil "if you mean by evil, something that distorts the good," he said. "Certainly, New Age is a distortion of what I believe would bring fulfillment to people. They are honestly seeking, but seeking down the wrong path."

Nicholas, director of Office of Communication, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, prepared this story on assignment from WM.

Tough topics attract teenagers to church

PRINCETON, N.J. (ABP) — Do you want to know how to attract teenagers to church?

Host dialogues on some of life's toughest questions, advises pollster George Gallup Jr.

Results of a recent Gallup Youth Survey show teens ages 13-17 have a "great deal of interest" in discussing questions such as:

— "Is there really a God?" (64%)

— "What is the meaning of my life?" (56%)

— "Is there really a heaven or hell?" (55%)

— "Why is there so much evil and hatred in the world?" (50%)

Less than 20% of teens surveyed expressed little or no interest in discussing such questions.

Results of the poll are reported in the September issue of *Emerging Trends*, the newsletter of the Princeton Religion Research Center.

Teenagers are most interested in discussing these difficult questions with people their own age, parents, and church leaders, the poll found. They are least interested in discussing the questions with teachers and college professors.

Topics teens said they are least interested in exploring include how to become more religious and what it would be like to try another religion or church.

On a different front, the poll asked teens about their spending habits. Less than one third (32%) reported making a financial donation to a church in the past week.

Among those who made donations, the median amount was \$2 for teens ages 13-15 and \$8.50 for teens ages 16-17.

Black teens were more than twice as likely as white or Hispanic teens to have contributed — and to have contributed more.

Baptist Record

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